United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1585
17 February 1994

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential Statement on Rwanda, expresses concern at delays in establishing broad-based transitional government as outlined in the Arusha Peace Agreement; says speedy installation of such a government would stem deterioration of humanitarian situation.

+ World Food Programme calls for greater international response to January appeal for $45 million in food and cash donations for thousands of refugees and displaced people in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina protests to Security Council about "permissive" definition Bosnian Serbian forces are being permitted of NATO ultimatum with regard to heavy weapons in and around Sarajevo, and of cease-fire agreement signed last week.

+ President of General Assembly tells ASEA workshop on peace and preventive diplomacy that time has come to explore fully possibilities for regional organizations to assist United Nations in maintaining peace and security.

* * *

The Security Council, in a Statement on the situation in Rwanda read out this afternoon by Council President Roble Olhaye (Djibouti), expressed deep concern at the delays in establishing the broad-based transitional government which was one of the key points in the Arusha Peace Agreement signed by the Rwandese parties. The absence of such a government, the Statement said, was an impediment to progress under that Agreement and to the functioning of institutions of the State. It was also having adverse effects on the humanitarian situation in the country, the deterioration of which was of profound concern to the international community. The speedy installation of a broad-based transitional government would facilitate the provision of more effective assistance to the populations in need.

The Council, taking note of the fact that the President of Rwanda had been sworn in as the interim Head of State, encouraged him to continue his efforts for the speedy installation of the other transitional institutions.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

It also called on all the parties to overcome their differences and cooperate fully with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and urged the establishment, without delay, of the provisional institutions provided for in the Arusha Agreement.

Expressing concern at the deterioration in the security situation, particularly in Kigali, the Council reminded the parties of their obligation to respect the weapon-free zone established in and around the city and called their attention to the consequences for them of non-compliance with that provision of the Agreement. It noted that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) would be assured of consistent support only if the parties implemented the Agreement fully and rapidly.

* * *

The World Food Programme has called for a greater international response to its January appeal for $45 million in food and cash donations for thousands of refugees and displaced people in Burundi, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire who are in extreme need of assistance. Only 25 per cent of the total needs has been funded, seriously hampering the procurement of urgently needed food supplies, according to the WFP. Since the beginning of the Burundi emergency in October 1993, the WFP has been forced to borrow large quantities of food from its other ongoing emergency and development operations in the region, to meet the enormous needs of some 1 million Burundese refugees and displaced people. In the last 100 days, the WFP has provided close to 60 million individual food rations.

But according to Bronek Szynalski, the WFP's Rome-based Director of Emergency Operations who just visited camps in Rwanda, that quantity of food was still insufficient to prevent malnutrition, which he described as appallingly high. In Burenge, Rwanda's most populated camp, with 38,312 refugees, non-governmental organizations have reported that nearly 40 per cent of children under five are malnourished.

* * *

The Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina has protested to the Security Council, in a letter dated 16 February (S/1994/183), the definition being afforded the Bosnian Serbian forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) demand that all heavy weapons in and around Sarajevo be withdrawn or placed under United Nations control, and of the cease-fire agreement signed at Sarajevo airport on 9 February.

He said that the "permissive and invalid definition" of the Security Council resolutions, combined with the interjection of United Nations forces along the existing confrontation lines, and with no further effort by the United Nations command in Bosnia to take control from Serbian forces of certain strategic placements, might have the "unwitting effect of solidifying the unacceptable status quo and institutionalizing the seige of Sarajevo, with its most negative humanitarian, military and political consequences".

(more)

The Ambassador said that his Government believed that the international community would want to avoid those consequences, and he urged the Security Council to take note and ensure its resolutions were effectively implemented and that the seige of Sarajevo was truly lifted.

* * *

The President of the General Assembly, S.R. Insanally (Guyana), said today that the time had come to explore fully the possibilities which Chapter VIII of the Charter provided for regional organizations to assist the United Nations in maintaining peace and security. In a message to the final workshop of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)/United Nations Cooperation on Peace and Preventive Diplomacy, being held in Bangkok, Thailand, today and tomorrow, he expressed concern that many local disputes had surfaced to compound the problems of other long-standing conflicts. In those diverse situations, he said, the United Nations had been hard put to maintain peace and security.

Over the past year, some regional organizations, at the request of the Secretary-General, had submitted written proposals on ways of further cooperating with the United Nations. He said that once those proposals were analysed, an attempt should be made to establish more structured mechanisms for such cooperation. He believed that such issues as the guarantee of the rights of individuals and of human, economic and social development were important factors in maintaining peace and security. It was therefore imperative, he said, that the "Agenda for Peace" be complemented by an "agenda for development".

* * *

CORRECTION: In the Daily Highlights of Wednesday, 16 February 1994, the first sentence in the third last paragraph should have read: "Lieutenant-General Abdo takes up his position on 18 February, replacing General Cevik Bir."

* *** *